

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY APRIL 4, 2016

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2015–16 REGULAR SESSION

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 1963

Introduced by Assembly Member Calderon

February 12, 2016

An act to amend Section 6000 of the Civil Code, relating to common interest developments.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 1963, as amended, Calderon. Common interest developments: construction defects.

Existing law, the Davis-Stirling Common Interest Development Act, requires, until July 1, 2017, specified conditions to be met before an association may file a complaint for damages against a builder, developer, or general contractor of a common interest development based upon a claim for defects in the design or construction of the common interest development.

This bill would delete the inoperative and repeal dates of the above described requirement, and would, instead, make these provisions inoperative on July 1, 2024, and would repeal these provisions as of January 1, 2025, as specified.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: no.
State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 6000 of the Civil Code is amended to
2 read:

1 6000. (a) Before an association files a complaint for damages
2 against a builder, developer, or general contractor (respondent) of
3 a common interest development based upon a claim for defects in
4 the design or construction of the common interest development,
5 all of the requirements of this section shall be satisfied with respect
6 to the builder, developer, or general contractor.

7 (b) The association shall serve upon the respondent a “Notice
8 of Commencement of Legal Proceedings.” The notice shall be
9 served by certified mail to the registered agent of the respondent,
10 or if there is no registered agent, then to any officer of the
11 respondent. If there are no current officers of the respondent,
12 service shall be upon the person or entity otherwise authorized by
13 law to receive service of process. Service upon the general
14 contractor shall be sufficient to initiate the process set forth in this
15 section with regard to any builder or developer, if the builder or
16 developer is not amenable to service of process by the foregoing
17 methods. This notice shall toll all applicable statutes of limitation
18 and repose, whether contractual or statutory, by and against all
19 potentially responsible parties, regardless of whether they were
20 named in the notice, including claims for indemnity applicable to
21 the claim for the period set forth in subdivision (c). The notice
22 shall include all of the following:

- 23 (1) The name and location of the project.
24 (2) An initial list of defects sufficient to apprise the respondent
25 of the general nature of the defects at issue.
26 (3) A description of the results of the defects, if known.
27 (4) A summary of the results of a survey or questionnaire
28 distributed to homeowners to determine the nature and extent of
29 defects, if a survey has been conducted or a questionnaire has been
30 distributed.
31 (5) Either a summary of the results of testing conducted to
32 determine the nature and extent of defects or the actual test results,
33 if that testing has been conducted.

34 (c) Service of the notice shall commence a period, not to exceed
35 180 days, during which the association, the respondent, and all
36 other participating parties shall try to resolve the dispute through
37 the processes set forth in this section. This 180-day period may be
38 extended for one additional period, not to exceed 180 days, only
39 upon the mutual agreement of the association, the respondent, and
40 any parties not deemed peripheral pursuant to paragraph (3) of

1 subdivision (e). Any extensions beyond the first extension shall
2 require the agreement of all participating parties. Unless extended,
3 the dispute resolution process prescribed by this section shall be
4 deemed completed. All extensions shall continue the tolling period
5 described in subdivision (b).

6 (d) Within 25 days of the date the association serves the Notice
7 of Commencement of Legal Proceedings, the respondent may
8 request in writing to meet and confer with the board. Unless the
9 respondent and the association otherwise agree, there shall be not
10 more than one meeting, which shall take place no later than 10
11 days from the date of the respondent's written request, at a mutually
12 agreeable time and place. The meeting shall be subject to
13 subdivision (a) of Section 4925 and subdivisions (a) and (b) of
14 Section 4935. The discussions at the meeting are privileged
15 communications and are not admissible in evidence in any civil
16 action, unless the association and the respondent consent in writing
17 to their admission.

18 (e) Upon receipt of the notice, the respondent shall, within 60
19 days, comply with the following:

20 (1) The respondent shall provide the association with access to,
21 for inspection and copying of, all plans and specifications,
22 subcontracts, and other construction files for the project that are
23 reasonably calculated to lead to the discovery of admissible
24 evidence regarding the defects claimed. The association shall
25 provide the respondent with access to, for inspection and copying
26 of, all files reasonably calculated to lead to the discovery of
27 admissible evidence regarding the defects claimed, including all
28 reserve studies, maintenance records and any survey questionnaires,
29 or results of testing to determine the nature and extent of defects.
30 To the extent any of the above documents are withheld based on
31 privilege, a privilege log shall be prepared and submitted to all
32 other parties. All other potentially responsible parties shall have
33 the same rights as the respondent regarding the production of
34 documents upon receipt of written notice of the claim, and shall
35 produce all relevant documents within 60 days of receipt of the
36 notice of the claim.

37 (2) The respondent shall provide written notice by certified mail
38 to all subcontractors, design professionals, their insurers, and the
39 insurers of any additional insured whose identities are known to
40 the respondent or readily ascertainable by review of the project

1 files or other similar sources and whose potential responsibility
2 appears on the face of the notice. This notice to subcontractors,
3 design professionals, and insurers shall include a copy of the Notice
4 of Commencement of Legal Proceedings, and shall specify the
5 date and manner by which the parties shall meet and confer to
6 select a dispute resolution facilitator pursuant to paragraph (1) of
7 subdivision (f), advise the recipient of its obligation to participate
8 in the meet and confer or serve a written acknowledgment of receipt
9 regarding this notice, advise the recipient that it will waive any
10 challenge to selection of the dispute resolution facilitator if it elects
11 not to participate in the meet and confer, advise the recipient that
12 it may seek the assistance of an attorney, and advise the recipient
13 that it should contact its insurer, if any. Any subcontractor or design
14 professional, or insurer for that subcontractor, design professional,
15 or additional insured, who receives written notice from the
16 respondent regarding the meet and confer shall, prior to the meet
17 and confer, serve on the respondent a written acknowledgment of
18 receipt. That subcontractor or design professional shall, within 10
19 days of service of the written acknowledgment of receipt, provide
20 to the association and the respondent a Statement of Insurance that
21 includes both of the following:

22 (A) The names, addresses, and contact persons, if known, of all
23 insurance carriers, whether primary or excess and regardless of
24 whether a deductible or self-insured retention applies, whose
25 policies were in effect from the commencement of construction
26 of the subject project to the present and which potentially cover
27 the subject claims.

28 (B) The applicable policy numbers for each policy of insurance
29 provided.

30 (3) Any subcontractor or design professional, or insurer for that
31 subcontractor, design professional, or additional insured, who so
32 chooses, may, at any time, make a written request to the dispute
33 resolution facilitator for designation as a peripheral party. That
34 request shall be served contemporaneously on the association and
35 the respondent. If no objection to that designation is received within
36 15 days, or upon rejection of that objection, the dispute resolution
37 facilitator shall designate that subcontractor or design professional
38 as a peripheral party, and shall thereafter seek to limit the
39 attendance of that subcontractor or design professional only to
40 those dispute resolution sessions deemed peripheral party sessions

1 or to those sessions during which the dispute resolution facilitator
2 believes settlement as to peripheral parties may be finalized.
3 Nothing in this subdivision shall preclude a party who has been
4 designated a peripheral party from being reclassified as a
5 nonperipheral party, nor shall this subdivision preclude a party
6 designated as a nonperipheral party from being reclassified as a
7 peripheral party after notice to all parties and an opportunity to
8 object. For purposes of this subdivision, a peripheral party is a
9 party having total claimed exposure of less than twenty-five
10 thousand dollars (\$25,000).

11 (f) (1) Within 20 days of sending the notice set forth in
12 paragraph (2) of subdivision (e), the association, respondent,
13 subcontractors, design professionals, and their insurers who have
14 been sent a notice as described in paragraph (2) of subdivision (e)
15 shall meet and confer in an effort to select a dispute resolution
16 facilitator to preside over the mandatory dispute resolution process
17 prescribed by this section. Any subcontractor or design professional
18 who has been given timely notice of this meeting but who does
19 not participate, waives any challenge he or she may have as to the
20 selection of the dispute resolution facilitator. The role of the dispute
21 resolution facilitator is to attempt to resolve the conflict in a fair
22 manner. The dispute resolution facilitator shall be sufficiently
23 knowledgeable in the subject matter and be able to devote sufficient
24 time to the case. The dispute resolution facilitator shall not be
25 required to reside in or have an office in the county in which the
26 project is located. The dispute resolution facilitator and the
27 participating parties shall agree to a date, time, and location to
28 hold a case management meeting of all parties and the dispute
29 resolution facilitator, to discuss the claims being asserted and the
30 scheduling of events under this section. The case management
31 meeting with the dispute resolution facilitator shall be held within
32 100 days of service of the Notice of Commencement of Legal
33 Proceedings at a location in the county where the project is located.
34 Written notice of the case management meeting with the dispute
35 resolution facilitator shall be sent by the respondent to the
36 association, subcontractors and design professionals, and their
37 insurers who are known to the respondent to be on notice of the
38 claim, no later than 10 days prior to the case management meeting,
39 and shall specify its date, time, and location. The dispute resolution

1 facilitator in consultation with the respondent shall maintain a
2 contact list of the participating parties.

3 (2) No later than 10 days prior to the case management meeting,
4 the dispute resolution facilitator shall disclose to the parties all
5 matters that could cause a person aware of the facts to reasonably
6 entertain a doubt that the proposed dispute resolution facilitator
7 would be able to resolve the conflict in a fair manner. The
8 facilitator's disclosure shall include the existence of any ground
9 specified in Section 170.1 of the Code of Civil Procedure for
10 disqualification of a judge, any attorney-client relationship the
11 facilitator has or had with any party or lawyer for a party to the
12 dispute resolution process, and any professional or significant
13 personal relationship the facilitator or his or her spouse or minor
14 child living in the household has or had with any party to the
15 dispute resolution process. The disclosure shall also be provided
16 to any subsequently noticed subcontractor or design professional
17 within 10 days of the notice.

18 (3) A dispute resolution facilitator shall be disqualified by the
19 court if he or she fails to comply with this subdivision and any
20 party to the dispute resolution process serves a notice of
21 disqualification prior to the case management meeting. If the
22 dispute resolution facilitator complies with this subdivision, he or
23 she shall be disqualified by the court on the basis of the disclosure
24 if any party to the dispute resolution process serves a notice of
25 disqualification prior to the case management meeting.

26 (4) If the parties cannot mutually agree to a dispute resolution
27 facilitator, then each party shall submit a list of three dispute
28 resolution facilitators. Each party may then strike one nominee
29 from the other parties' list, and petition the court, pursuant to the
30 procedure described in subdivisions (n) and (o), for final selection
31 of the dispute resolution facilitator. The court may issue an order
32 for final selection of the dispute resolution facilitator pursuant to
33 this paragraph.

34 (5) Any subcontractor or design professional who receives notice
35 of the association's claim without having previously received
36 timely notice of the meet and confer to select the dispute resolution
37 facilitator shall be notified by the respondent regarding the name,
38 address, and telephone number of the dispute resolution facilitator.
39 Any such subcontractor or design professional may serve upon
40 the parties and the dispute resolution facilitator a written objection

1 to the dispute resolution facilitator within 15 days of receiving
2 notice of the claim. Within seven days after service of this
3 objection, the subcontractor or design professional may petition
4 the superior court to replace the dispute resolution facilitator. The
5 court may replace the dispute resolution facilitator only upon a
6 showing of good cause, liberally construed. Failure to satisfy the
7 deadlines set forth in this subdivision shall constitute a waiver of
8 the right to challenge the dispute resolution facilitator.

9 (6) The costs of the dispute resolution facilitator shall be
10 apportioned in the following manner: one-third to be paid by the
11 association; one-third to be paid by the respondent; and one-third
12 to be paid by the subcontractors and design professionals, as
13 allocated among them by the dispute resolution facilitator. The
14 costs of the dispute resolution facilitator shall be recoverable by
15 the prevailing party in any subsequent litigation pursuant to Section
16 1032 of the Code of Civil Procedure, provided however that any
17 nonsettling party may, prior to the filing of the complaint, petition
18 the facilitator to reallocate the costs of the dispute resolution
19 facilitator as they apply to any nonsettling party. The determination
20 of the dispute resolution facilitator with respect to the allocation
21 of these costs shall be binding in any subsequent litigation. The
22 dispute resolution facilitator shall take into account all relevant
23 factors and equities between all parties in the dispute resolution
24 process when reallocating costs.

25 (7) In the event the dispute resolution facilitator is replaced at
26 any time, the case management statement created pursuant to
27 subdivision (h) shall remain in full force and effect.

28 (8) The dispute resolution facilitator shall be empowered to
29 enforce all provisions of this section.

30 (g) (1) No later than the case management meeting, the parties
31 shall begin to generate a data compilation showing the following
32 information regarding the alleged defects at issue:

33 (A) The scope of the work performed by each potentially
34 responsible subcontractor.

35 (B) The tract or phase number in which each subcontractor
36 provided goods or services, or both.

37 (C) The units, either by address, unit number, or lot number, at
38 which each subcontractor provided goods or services, or both.

39 (2) This data compilation shall be updated as needed to reflect
40 additional information. Each party attending the case management

1 meeting, and any subsequent meeting pursuant to this section, shall
2 provide all information available to that party relevant to this data
3 compilation.

4 (h) At the case management meeting, the parties shall, with the
5 assistance of the dispute resolution facilitator, reach agreement on
6 a case management statement, which shall set forth all of the
7 elements set forth in paragraphs (1) to (8), inclusive, except that
8 the parties may dispense with one or more of these elements if
9 they agree that it is appropriate to do so. The case management
10 statement shall provide that the following elements shall take place
11 in the following order:

12 (1) Establishment of a document depository, located in the
13 county where the project is located, for deposit of documents,
14 defect lists, demands, and other information provided for under
15 this section. All documents exchanged by the parties and all
16 documents created pursuant to this subdivision shall be deposited
17 in the document depository, which shall be available to all parties
18 throughout the prefilings dispute resolution process and in any
19 subsequent litigation. When any document is deposited in the
20 document depository, the party depositing the document shall
21 provide written notice identifying the document to all other parties.
22 The costs of maintaining the document depository shall be
23 apportioned among the parties in the same manner as the costs of
24 the dispute resolution facilitator.

25 (2) Provision of a more detailed list of defects by the association
26 to the respondent after the association completes a visual inspection
27 of the project. This list of defects shall provide sufficient detail
28 for the respondent to ensure that all potentially responsible
29 subcontractors and design professionals are provided with notice
30 of the dispute resolution process. If not already completed prior
31 to the case management meeting, the Notice of Commencement
32 of Legal Proceedings shall be served by the respondent on all
33 additional subcontractors and design professionals whose potential
34 responsibility appears on the face of the more detailed list of
35 defects within seven days of receipt of the more detailed list. The
36 respondent shall serve a copy of the case management statement,
37 including the name, address, and telephone number of the dispute
38 resolution facilitator, to all the potentially responsible
39 subcontractors and design professionals at the same time.

1 (3) Nonintrusive visual inspection of the project by the
2 respondent, subcontractors, and design professionals.

3 (4) Invasive testing conducted by the association, if the
4 association deems appropriate. All parties may observe and
5 photograph any testing conducted by the association pursuant to
6 this paragraph, but may not take samples or direct testing unless,
7 by mutual agreement, costs of testing are shared by the parties.

8 (5) Provision by the association of a comprehensive demand
9 which provides sufficient detail for the parties to engage in
10 meaningful dispute resolution as contemplated under this section.

11 (6) Invasive testing conducted by the respondent, subcontractors,
12 and design professionals, if they deem appropriate.

13 (7) Allowance for modification of the demand by the association
14 if new issues arise during the testing conducted by the respondent,
15 subcontractor, or design professionals.

16 (8) Facilitated dispute resolution of the claim, with all parties,
17 including peripheral parties, as appropriate, and insurers, if any,
18 present and having settlement authority. The dispute resolution
19 facilitators shall endeavor to set specific times for the attendance
20 of specific parties at dispute resolution sessions. If the dispute
21 resolution facilitator does not set specific times for the attendance
22 of parties at dispute resolution sessions, the dispute resolution
23 facilitator shall permit those parties to participate in dispute
24 resolution sessions by telephone.

25 (i) In addition to the foregoing elements of the case management
26 statement described in subdivision (h), upon mutual agreement of
27 the parties, the dispute resolution facilitator may include any or
28 all of the following elements in a case management statement: the
29 exchange of consultant or expert photographs; expert presentations;
30 expert meetings; or any other mechanism deemed appropriate by
31 the parties in the interest of resolving the dispute.

32 (j) The dispute resolution facilitator, with the guidance of the
33 parties, shall at the time the case management statement is
34 established, set deadlines for the occurrence of each event set forth
35 in the case management statement, taking into account such factors
36 as the size and complexity of the case, and the requirement of this
37 section that this dispute resolution process not exceed 180 days
38 absent agreement of the parties to an extension of time.

(k) (1) At a time to be determined by the dispute resolution facilitator, the respondent may submit to the association all of the following:

(A) A request to meet with the board to discuss a written settlement offer.

(B) A written settlement offer, and a concise explanation of the reasons for the terms of the offer.

(C) A statement that the respondent has access to sufficient funds to satisfy the conditions of the settlement offer.

(D) A summary of the results of testing conducted for the purposes of determining the nature and extent of defects, if this testing has been conducted, unless the association provided the respondent with actual test results.

(2) If the respondent does not timely submit the items required by this subdivision, the association shall be relieved of any further obligation to satisfy the requirements of this subdivision only.

(3) No less than 10 days after the respondent submits the items required by this paragraph, the respondent and the board shall meet and confer about the respondent's settlement offer.

(4) If the board rejects a settlement offer presented at the meeting held pursuant to this subdivision, the board shall hold a meeting open to each member of the association. The meeting shall be held no less than 15 days before the association commences an action for damages against the respondent.

(5) No less than 15 days before this meeting is held, a written notice shall be sent to each member of the association specifying all of the following:

(A) That a meeting will take place to discuss problems that may lead to the filing of a civil action, and the time and place of this meeting.

(B) The options that are available to address the problems, including the filing of a civil action and a statement of the various alternatives that are reasonably foreseeable by the association to pay for those options and whether these payments are expected to be made from the use of reserve account funds or the imposition of regular or special assessments, or emergency assessment increases.

(C) The complete text of any written settlement offer, and a concise explanation of the specific reasons for the terms of the

1 offer submitted to the board at the meeting held pursuant to
2 subdivision (d) that was received from the respondent.

3 (6) The respondent shall pay all expenses attributable to sending
4 the settlement offer to all members of the association. The
5 respondent shall also pay the expense of holding the meeting, not
6 to exceed three dollars (\$3) per association member.

7 (7) The discussions at the meeting and the contents of the notice
8 and the items required to be specified in the notice pursuant to
9 ~~subparagraph (E)~~ *paragraph (5)* are privileged communications
10 and are not admissible in evidence in any civil action, unless the
11 association consents to their admission.

12 (8) No more than one request to meet and discuss a written
13 settlement offer may be made by the respondent pursuant to this
14 subdivision.

15 (l) All defect lists and demands, communications, negotiations,
16 and settlement offers made in the course of the prelitigation dispute
17 resolution process provided by this section shall be inadmissible
18 pursuant to Sections 1119 to 1124, inclusive, of the Evidence Code
19 and all applicable decisional law. This inadmissibility shall not be
20 extended to any other documents or communications which would
21 not otherwise be deemed inadmissible.

22 (m) Any subcontractor or design professional may, at any time,
23 petition the dispute resolution facilitator to release that party from
24 the dispute resolution process upon a showing that the
25 subcontractor or design professional is not potentially responsible
26 for the defect claims at issue. The petition shall be served
27 contemporaneously on all other parties, who shall have 15 days
28 from the date of service to object. If a subcontractor or design
29 professional is released, and it later appears to the dispute
30 resolution facilitator that it may be a responsible party in light of
31 the current defect list or demand, the respondent shall renote the
32 party as provided by paragraph (2) of subdivision (e), provide a
33 copy of the current defect list or demand, and direct the party to
34 attend a dispute resolution session at a stated time and location. A
35 party who subsequently appears after having been released by the
36 dispute resolution facilitator shall not be prejudiced by its absence
37 from the dispute resolution process as the result of having been
38 previously released by the dispute resolution facilitator.

39 (n) Any party may, at any time, petition the superior court in
40 the county where the project is located, upon a showing of good

1 cause, and the court may issue an order, for any of the following,
2 or for appointment of a referee to resolve a dispute regarding any
3 of the following:

4 (1) To take a deposition of any party to the process, or subpoena
5 a third party for deposition or production of documents, which is
6 necessary to further prelitigation resolution of the dispute.

7 (2) To resolve any disputes concerning inspection, testing,
8 production of documents, or exchange of information provided
9 for under this section.

10 (3) To resolve any disagreements relative to the timing or
11 contents of the case management statement.

12 (4) To authorize internal extensions of timeframes set forth in
13 the case management statement.

14 (5) To seek a determination that a settlement is a good faith
15 settlement pursuant to Section 877.6 of the Code of Civil Procedure
16 and all related authorities. The page limitations and meet and confer
17 requirements specified in this section shall not apply to these
18 motions, which may be made on shortened notice. Instead, these
19 motions shall be subject to other applicable state law, rules of
20 court, and local rules. A determination made by the court pursuant
21 to this motion shall have the same force and effect as the
22 determination of a postfiling application or motion for good faith
23 settlement.

24 (6) To ensure compliance, on shortened notice, with the
25 obligation to provide a Statement of Insurance pursuant to
26 paragraph (2) of subdivision (e).

27 (7) For any other relief appropriate to the enforcement of the
28 provisions of this section, including the ordering of parties, and
29 insurers, if any, to the dispute resolution process with settlement
30 authority.

31 (o) (1) A petition filed pursuant to subdivision (n) shall be filed
32 in the superior court in the county in which the project is located.
33 The court shall hear and decide the petition within 10 days after
34 filing. The petitioning party shall serve the petition on all parties,
35 including the date, time, and location of the hearing no later than
36 five business days prior to the hearing. Any responsive papers
37 shall be filed and served no later than three business days prior to
38 the hearing. Any petition or response filed under this section shall
39 be no more than three pages in length.

1 (2) All parties shall meet with the dispute resolution facilitator,
2 if one has been appointed and confer in person or by telephone
3 prior to the filing of that petition to attempt to resolve the matter
4 without requiring court intervention.

5 (p) As used in this section:

6 (1) "Association" shall have the same meaning as defined in
7 Section 4080.

8 (2) "Builder" means the declarant, as defined in Section 4130.

9 (3) "Common interest development" shall have the same
10 meaning as in Section 4100, except that it shall not include
11 developments or projects with less than 20 units.

12 (q) The alternative dispute resolution process and procedures
13 described in this section shall have no application or legal effect
14 other than as described in this section.

15 (r) This section shall become operative on July 1, 2002, however
16 it shall not apply to any pending suit or claim for which notice has
17 previously been given.

18 (s) *This section shall become inoperative on July 1, 2024, and,*
19 *as of January 1, 2025, is repealed, unless a later enacted statute,*
20 *that becomes operative on or before January 1, 2025, deletes or*
21 *extends the dates on which it becomes inoperative and is repealed.*